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## The U.S. has a new center in Texas to disperse sterile screwworm flies to block a parasite it spawns



A test container of dyed fly pupae are displayed at a Domestic New World Screwworm Sterile Fly Production Facility to combat the northward spread of NWS and protect American livestock, in Edinburg, Texas, Monday, Feb. 9, 2026.

Associated Press

By JOHN HANNA and ERIC GAY

Associated Press

**EDINBURG, Texas (AP)** — The first center for dispersing sterile screwworm flies from U.S. soil in decades opened Monday in Texas, part of a larger effort to keep the flesh-eating parasite they spawn from crossing the Mexican border and wreaking havoc on the American cattle industry. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott unveiled the new facility on a former Air Force base near Edinburg, Texas. It will allow the U.S. to disperse millions of sterile male New World screwworm flies bred in Mexico or Panama on both sides of the border. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is building a new \$750 million factory nearby for breeding sterile flies, but Rollins said construction on the fly factory won't be done until the end of 2027. The USDA also is spending \$21 million to convert a fruit fly breeding facility in far southern Mexico into one for breeding screwworm flies starting this summer.

The sterile male flies would mate with wild females, who mate only once in their weeklong adult lives. Their eggs, laid in open wounds or on mucous membranes, would then not hatch into the flesh-eating maggots that can infest livestock, wild mammals, household pets and even humans.

"It's a real testament to the all hands on deck — federal state and local — the fact that we do not have the pest in our country yet," Rollins said.

In November, the USDA opened a facility in Tampico in central Mexico for dispersing Panama-bred flies. However, it is about 330 miles (530 kilometers) south of the U.S.-Mexico border.

"We knew we needed a short-term, gap-filling solution, which is exactly what we are cutting a ribbon on today," Abbott said.

The Mexican cattle industry has been hit hard by New World screwworm fly larvae infestations, and the U.S. has closed the border since July to imports of cattle, bison and horses.

A similar program breeding sterile male flies had largely eradicated the pest from American soil by the early 1970s, except for a limited, short-lived outbreak in the Florida Keys in 2017 and its appearance recently when officials blocked a horse being imported from Argentina into Florida until the animal was fully treated, Rollins said. The U.S. shut down its fly factories after eliminating the pest from its soil, and sterile males have been bred since in the Western Hemisphere only at a single facility in Panama, which can produce about 117 million a week. The new fly factory in Texas would be designed to produce 300 million a week.

The USDA also announced last month that it is offering up to \$100 million in grants for projects designed to improve fly breeding, create new fly traps and lures, and produce treatments for infestations. □

M A R E A

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# Record cold has fireplaces working overtime. Should those ashes be put to use in the garden?

By JESSICA DAMIANO  
Associated Press

With record cold gripping much of North America this winter, many who find themselves with an abundance of fireplace ashes are wondering whether they can use them in the garden.

Wood ashes from burned untreated wood can be beneficial for your plants but with a few caveats. Ashes contain nutrients like potassium, which supports the overall health of plants, phosphorus, which promotes strong root systems, and calcium, which facilitates plants' absorption of other soil nutrients.

They also raise soil pH, making it more alkaline. That could be beneficial for folks with naturally acidic soil wanting to grow plants like tomatoes, peppers and eggplants, but it could spell disaster for gardeners who want to grow acid-loving plants like rhododendrons, azaleas or blueberries. And if your soil is already alkaline with a pH of 7 or higher raising it further with ashes would risk interfering with many plants' ability to thrive.

Despite the alkalinizing properties of wood ashes, they should not be relied on as the sole pH-raising amendment for very acidic soils. Although they can be helpful for borderline soils, it would take a tremendous amount of ash to change soil pH from too low to neutral.

The only way to know your soil's pH level is to test it either with an at-home kit, which you can buy at garden centers or online, or by bringing a soil sample to your county's cooperative extension office or master gardener clinic for testing and amendment recommendations. Armed with this information, you can make an educated decision about whether ashes will benefit your soil and plants.



Ash collects at the bottom of a fireplace as a wood fire burns in Waitsfield, Vt. on Monday, Feb. 9, 2026.

Associated Press

Here are a few more tips to get you on your way.

## Know your wood

Whatever the wood contains will be absorbed by your soil and, in turn, your plants. Avoid using ashes from treated wood or from trees grown in polluted areas, which may contain chemicals and contaminants, such as heavy metals.

Coal ash and charcoal briquette ash should never be incorporated into garden soil because they contain toxins.

## Make necessary preparations

Before spreading, ensure ashes have cooled completely. This can take a week or more.

Sift the ashes through a compost sifter to remove pieces of burned wood and debris. If you don't have a sifter, you can use an old window screen or make your own by affixing 1/2- or 1/4-inch (1.3- or 0.6-centimeter) hardware cloth to a large art frame (or make a wood frame yourself).

## Don't overdo it

If you obtained dosing recommendations with your soil test, follow them precisely. Otherwise, apply no more than one 5-gallon (3.8-liter) bucket of ash,

roughly 20 pounds (9 kilograms), to a 1,000-square-foot (93-square-meter) area of garden per year. This limit should allow plants to reap the nutritive benefits of ash without adversely raising the soil's pH. Retest annually before reapplying.

You can also sprinkle similar proportions of ash over the lawn or add it to compost.

## Leave time between application and planting

In winter, apply ashes to bare soil (without snow cover) on a windless day. Moisten well with a gentle shower stream to facilitate absorption and prevent ashes from blowing around. □

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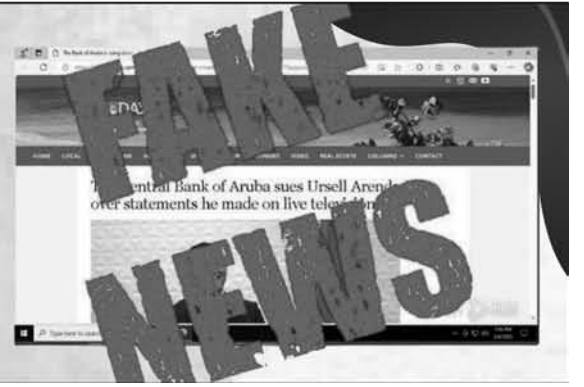
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## Movie Review: Stephen Curry's animated basketball movie 'GOAT' is a disappointing air ball

By **MARK KENNEDY**  
AP Entertainment Writer

You'd expect an animated basketball movie with four-time NBA champion Stephen Curry in the producer's chair to be an easy lay-up. So why is "GOAT" such a brick?

Despite a wondrously textured, kinetic world and some interesting oddball characters, the movie is undone by a predictable, saccharine script. It's as easy to see the steps coming as a Curry three-pointer arching into the net.

The movie has the kind of lazy, thin writing that feels like it all could have derived from a boozy Hollywood happy hour get-together: "Bro, bro. Wait. What if the GOAT was an actual goat?"

It centers on Will Harris, a goat with dreams of becoming a great baller, voiced by "Stranger Things" star Caleb McLaughlin. Undersized and an orphan again with the orphans, guys? Will is a delivery driv-



This image released by Sony Pictures shows the character Will, voiced by Caleb McLaughlin, in a scene from the animated film "GOAT."

er for a diner and late on his rent. He's a great outside shooter but a liability in the paint, unless he learns, that is.

He lives in Vineland, a hectic urban landscape with

graffiti and living vines that choke the playgrounds and is a rabid supporter of the local franchise, the Thorns. His idol is veteran Jett Fillmore, a leopard who's the league's all-time leading scorer, nicely voiced by

Gabrielle Union. The Thorns are a bit of a mess, despite Jett's brilliance. The game here is called roarball, a high-intensity, co-ed, multi-animal, full-contact sport derived from basketball with a hollow ball that has

small holes. It's a "Mad Max" sport ultraviolent, un-officiated and the dangers lurk not just from the beefy opponents but from the arena itself. The championship award is called the Claw.

The best part of the movie may be the environments for the other arenas: lava in one, a swamp with stalagmites and stalactites in another, plus an ice-bound one and another with desert sandstorms and rocks. Homefield advantage is a big thing in this league.

There seem to be only two kinds of points scored here: blazing windmills, cutting tomahawks and spectacular alley-oop dunks or slow-mo threes from so far downtown they might as well be in a different zip code. No mid-range jumpers, bro.

This universe is divided into "bigs" and "smalls": rhinos, bears and giraffes on one side, gerbils and capybara on the other, and Will is deemed a small. □

Associated Press



(L-R) Paul Thomas Anderson, recipient of a Directors Guild of America Feature Film Medallion for "One Battle After Another," and Leonardo DiCaprio pose in the press room during the 78th Annual Directors Guild Of America Awards at The Beverly Hilton on February 07, 2026 in Beverly Hills, California.

## Paul Thomas Anderson wins top director prize for 'One Battle After Another'

Beverly Hills, United States — "One Battle After Another" director Paul Thomas Anderson won top honors at the Directors Guild of America Awards in Los Angeles on Saturday, solidifying his film's position as a strong favorite for the Oscars.

Anderson, whose movie follows a former revolutionary who tries to protect his teenage daughter when the past comes back to haunt him, won the feature-film prize — the award considered a key indicator of what might happen at the Academy Awards, which cap off the Hollywood awards season.

"It's a tremendous honor to be given this," Anderson said upon accepting the award at the gala held in Beverly Hills.

"We're going to take it with the love that it's given and the appreciation of all our comrades in this room," he added.

Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, the film, which depicts a timeless America where white supremacists plot behind the scenes, immigration raids sweep through communities and revolutionary groups take up arms, also won recognition in January at the Critics' Choice Awards and the Golden Globes.

"One Battle After Another" will enter the Oscars as the second-most-nominated film, with 13 nominations. It is behind only the vampire film "Sinners" directed by Ryan Coogler, which garnered 16 nominations, a record for the Academy Awards. □



# India's migratory beekeepers and their hives follow the flowers to make the honey flow

By **MELINA WALLING** and  
**ANUPAM NATH**

**Associated Press**

**BINNABARI, India (AP)** —

The beekeepers rise early. They've come a long way to spend the winter months in the electric yellow mustard fields of Assam, and they have to make the trip worth it.

At dawn, they eat a simple breakfast and won't eat again until dusk. They'll spend all day checking the hives, smoking them to disperse the bees so they can collect thick golden honeycombs to be sold overseas. It's a demanding job. Stings are a fact of life. At night, the workers settle in under blue tarpaulins and think of the families they've left behind, sometimes for months at a time, to move their wooden bee boxes to this place. But the harvest is a way to make ends meet.

"I earn an income, that's why I do business," said Karan Raj, a beekeeper from Bihar.

Migratory beekeepers have moved their colonies of bees from field to field for decades in India, following the bloom of flowers to help farmers with pollination and



**A migratory beekeeper holds a piece of a beehive in the Binnabari village in Baksa district of Assam, India, Friday, Jan. 16, 2026.**

collecting the honey.

The practice is relatively new but growing in Assam, where local and migratory beekeepers alike are turning to the farms in the region to support what they say is a growing demand for honey. But climate change threatens all that. Beekeepers are persisting in the face of floods, more powerful monsoons and extreme heat, as

well as development that changes the landscapes bees rely on.

"If the weather is fine, the production will be fine. If the weather spoils, then there is no production. Weather has an effect. The weather needs to be good," said Ranjeet Kumar, another beekeeper.

Extreme weather affects

bee behavior, honey production

Assam, nestled east of Bangladesh and south of the Himalayas, is a region where the extremes of climate change have already unleashed catastrophe as human-caused warming makes rainfall more intense and erratic. Flooding and landslides in 2024 killed over 100 people, and many

farmers have seen their crops destroyed and had to evacuate repeatedly.

"The pattern of rain is changing," said Mukul Kumar Deka, who studies honeybees and other pollinators at Assam Agricultural University. When it's too dry for too long, there's less nectar available. When it's too hot or too rainy, the bees stay in their hives.

Assam is now seeing over 20 more heat-wave days than it did 10 years ago, and both average maximum temperatures and nighttime low temperatures have increased by about 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), according to 2025 research from Madhya Kamrup College in Assam.

**Associated Press**

"Nowadays most of the farmers are getting less honey," Deka said.

Local bees and Western bees affected differently, but beekeeping persists.

Migratory beekeepers usually use Western honeybees, a departure from the practice of many traditional growers who keep local species of bees. □

# China's Lunar New Year travel rush begins with record 9.5 billion trips expected

**BEIJING (AP)** — Liu Zhi-quan was waiting for a 30-plus hour train journey to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, some 1,242 miles (2,000 kilometers) from Beijing, where he works in construction.

He's one of the hundreds of millions expected to travel to their hometowns as part of the world's largest movement of humanity, or "chunyun" as it's called in China, ahead of the Lunar New Year on Feb. 17.

"Things feel worse this year than last. The economy is bad and it's getting harder to make money," he said. Liu chose a slower train to save money: a high-speed train would take just nine hours but costs more than

twice as much.

Nonetheless, he chose to make the 30-hour journey to be home for the festival, the one time of year workers across the country take breaks and spend time with their loved ones.

China's government estimates that 9.5 billion trips will be made during the 40 day-period around the festival, a record high, according to information from the National Development and Reform Commission. Some 540 million of those trips will be made via train, and 95 million by air. The rest will be on the road. In a country where workers are expected to put in long hours including on weekends and get few

days of annual leave, the Lunar New Year festival is a precious time.

At a train station in Beijing, passengers were crowded in the waiting areas with large bags and suitcases as they waited for their trains. Others snacked on instant noodles, an easy snack as stations provide hot water for free.

Tian Duofu, a young woman who recently started working full time in Beijing, said she was looking forward to the nine-day holiday, which begins Feb. 15. "It has become more difficult for a big family to get together. After I started working, I realized such a long holiday is rare and we see each other less

and less in person, which makes the Spring Festival significant."

"The new year is the festival of the year, and if we don't go back home, we won't be able to enjoy the

festival atmosphere," said Tian Yunxia, a woman from Henan province who runs a breakfast stall in Beijing. "I want to go home to see my children, my grandchildren and my husband." □



**Suitcases are stacked as passengers wait at a railway station while returning home during the Lunar New Year holiday in Beijing, China, Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026.**

**Associated Press**





**Lorena Antiman, Cultural Mediator for Corporacion NGEN teaching session regarding prompts takes place at the Quili.AI headquarters Jan. 31, 2026, in Quilicura, Chile.**

Associated Press

## Chile launches open-source AI model designed for Latin America

By **CLARA PREVE**  
Associated Press

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina**

**(AP)** — Chile on Tuesday launched the first open-source artificial intelligence language model trained on the diverse cultures of Latin America, aiming to better reflect regional realities and strengthen the region's presence in the global AI race.

Latam-GPT is the result of a two-year regional effort led by the National Center of Artificial Intelligence of Chile, CENIA, and supported by over 30 institutions across eight Latin American countries.

"Artificial intelligence is the greatest technological revolution of recent times, and from Latin America and the Caribbean, it is strategic and urgent that we play a role," Chilean President Gabriel Boric said Tuesday after the launch, noting that the new system will be key to adding Latin American data and identity to AI.

Announced at the February 2025 Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris, the project launched in early 2023 to address linguistic biases in models trained primarily on English data. Rather than com-

peting directly with consumer tools like ChatGPT or Google Gemini, Latam-GPT acts as a foundational infrastructure for future regional applications.

"Latam-GPT is trained with a proportion of Latin American data that previously did not exist online and was not included in existing models," said Rodrigo Durán, executive director at CENIA. "This allows for more accurate, correct and efficient performance when it comes to Latin America and the Caribbean."

Latam-GPT is trained on data from private sources obtained through strategic partnerships across the region, as well as synthetic data used to address areas identified as under-represented, said Gabriela Arriagada, a researcher at CENIA and head of the project's ethics team. Developing Latam-GPT required collecting more than eight terabytes of data, equivalent to millions of books.

"When we talk about incorporating Latin American culture, we are referring to a training approach designed to address data that reflects cultural realities, identifying where gaps exist in other models,

understanding their shortcomings, and gradually building knowledge to improve that representation," Arriagada added.

Latam-GPT is a "very important milestone for Latin America," as it contains data that captures each country's particularities, said Luis Chiruzzo, an engineering professor at the University of the Republic in Uruguay not involved with the project.

"That provides some assurance that, at the very least, everyone is included in the training," Chiruzzo added.

For now, the project will operate primarily in Spanish and Portuguese, with plans to incorporate Indigenous languages in later stages.

The development of Latam-GPT means the region now has the technical capacity to build AI models, according to Durán, the executive director at CENIA. "The fact that Latin America has come together to form a collaborative group is a very positive sign. It shows that Latin America can develop and understand how to create this technology, which also has important implications for regulation, because you cannot regulate something you do not understand," he added. □

## Take a ride across frozen sea on Estonia's ice road

By **KOSTYA MANENKOV**  
Associated Press

**HIIMUMAA, Estonia (AP)** — Temperatures in northern Europe have been so low that citizens of Estonia can now drive across a 20-kilometer (12 1/2-mile) stretch of frozen sea linking the country's two main islands. The so-called "ice road" connecting the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, located in western Estonia between the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga, was officially opened on Sunday with a line of cars waiting to use it that afternoon.

Authorities decided to open the ice road after locals had spontaneously began driving across the frozen sea, exposing themselves to serious risks. Ferries had struggled to keep up regular service in the frozen sea following weeks of temperatures dropping to minus 10 degrees Celsius (14 degrees Fahrenheit).

People living on the smaller island of Hiiumaa, with a population of 9,000, travel to Saaremaa, population 31,000, for shopping, a cup of coffee, or to drop off kids at school. Getting to the larger island also ensures connection to mainland Estonia.

While opening the ice road came out of necessity, Hergo Tasuja, the mayor of Hiiumaa, says it's also "part of our culture."

"For generations and generations, local people who live here, especially those who live near the sea, swim and use boats in the summertime," Tasuja told The Associated Press. "And in winter, it's in their blood to go to the sea" and step out on the ice, he said.

The road is essentially a marked corridor on the frozen sea where specialists have determined the ice is thick enough to sustain the weight of driving cars.

Yet preparing the road is not easy, said Marek Koppel, a road maintenance supervisor at Verston Eesti, the Estonian construction company in charge of building and managing the ice road. Workers have to measure ice thickness every 100 meters (328 feet) to determine the areas with more than 24 centimeters (9 1/2 inches) of ice, the minimum required for safety. They also smooth over ridged ice and cracks. Weather conditions and the solidity of ice are monitored around the clock and the route amended accordingly.

A vehicle cannot be heavier than 2.5 tons (5,500 pounds) and it has to drive either below 20 kph (12.4 mph), or between 40 and 70 kph (25 and 43 mph) anything in between can create a vibration that damages the ice. □



**Two cars cross the frozen Soela Strait in the Baltic Sea near Hiiumaa, Estonia, Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026.**

Associated Press



## Food culture in Aruba

**(Oranjestad) – Like many other cultures, an important aspect of the Aruban cultural identity is our connection to food and food traditions. The local food traditions consist of a melting pot of different cultural and religious eating habits and dishes.**

Breakfast, lunch and dinner  
The routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner on the island is one that does not completely follow a European or American routine, despite the major influences from these parts of the world on our culture and way of living. When it comes to the three important meals of the day, most of the Aruban population follows a Latin-American influenced routine.

### Breakfast

Breakfast in Aruba is quite simple: a cup of coffee or tea, some bread, and sometimes an egg. Sometimes, due to the need of a quick “to-go” breakfast, you may also find many snack trucks and cafes that sell sandwiches, pastechis (meat pie), arepas and empanadas early in the morning.

### Main Meal

The main meal is typically eaten in most households around noon or in the afternoon. This can consist of meat, fish, and chicken—stewed or fried—with funchi (polenta) or rice with stewed vegetables. Often, fried or boiled plantain or pan bati (Aruban pancake) is included. Stews are a staple in Aruban cuisine and can be largely influenced by Latin-American and Latin/Afro-Caribbean Stews. Some of the more unique stews and soups from the ABC Islands\* include sopi bonch'i rabo (red kidney bean soup with pig tail), sopi mondongo (tripe soup), carni stoba (beef stew), comcomber stoba (West Indian gherkin stew) and much more.

### Dinner Time

Dinner time can vary significantly from household to household. Unlike the U.S. or in Europe, dinner time

typically does not consist of a whole (warm) meal. Instead, the evening “meal” can typically consist of something lighter, like a sandwich, though it is not uncommon to see leftovers from the main meal reheated and eaten again. Tea and coffee are often also served with the evening snack.

### (Religious) Holidays

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela. Ayacas and the famous pan di ham\* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items. Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

### Snacks and tasty delights

Besides meals and dishes that are eaten on the dinner table, Aruba also has a food tradition that includes snacks and other tasty delights that you may easily find around the island. These include, Saco\*, baskets, pastechi, kroket, deditos, Johnny cake and more. These snacks are usually sold at local snack trucks and cafes, often located on the side of the road. In the area of Tanki Leendert and Tanki flip, for example, there are many of these trucks parked on the side of the road and often open until late at night—offering tasty and filling snacks post night-life fun.

\*ABC Islands: Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao

\*Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de



Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives)

\*Saco: Saco literally means “bag”. Saco contains fried potatoes, plantains, chick-

en (and ribs) and a Johnny cake, served in a paper bag. □

Source: Voeding, voedingsgewoonten en gerechten op Aruba (Nutrition, Food Traditions and Dishes on Aruba) by Biblioteca Nacional Aruba

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## Adriaan Laclé: One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century

(Oranjestad)—The name **Adriaan Laclé** may ring a bell to locals as one of the main roads on the island, but about a century ago, **Adriaan Laclé** was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned sev-

eral plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad.

Regarding his personal life, it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife



soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made

it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as the townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

**Source: De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba) by Evert Bongers.**

## Basic driving rules on Aruba: Traffic signs

(Oranjestad)—Though Aruba's traffic is relatively easy to manage, driving here—especially if it's your first time visiting—can be foreign. To help you out, here's a breakdown of some traffic signs you might encounter on the road.

### Speed limit in certain areas

As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair, bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out. Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for

example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a similar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit [aruba-travelguide.com](http://aruba-travelguide.com) for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

Picture credits: [aruba-travelguide.com](http://aruba-travelguide.com)





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Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard  
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts  
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## The Aruban way of life: Creating community with Cas di Torto

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban people understand that a happy life is spent in great ambience with your loved ones. Passed down from one generation to the other, building community has been a key aspect in forging our traditions and customs. The Cas di Torto (mud house) played a big role in cultivating community, bridging families together and forming close bonds with your neighbors—something we highly value today.

### Cas di Torto: History and construction

The origin of the Cas di Torto is said to date back to the early 19th century in the Paraguaná Peninsula in Venezuela. Refugees who sought sanctuary on Aruba introduced this building method to the island.

The uprights of the walls were made with sturdy and straight wayaca or



kwihi wood, or from thin mangrove struts. Then, the wattle walls were weaved in using branches and twigs from the warero and sisal plant, daubed with a mixture of grass and mud. Finally, the walls got a coat of white plaster to seal everything in.

For roofing, corn stalks, palm fronds and straws were used, allowing air to flow freely through the house. This method of roofing was known throughout the ABC

islands (Aruba, Curacao, Bonaire), but the use of cornstalks in Aruba eventually got replaced with use of mud and white plaster for the roofs. The white plaster all around made the houses look like cake, hence the name "Torto" (Spanish for "cake").

### Building community

Building Torto houses was often a community effort. Young couples who were about to get married had to have their house built be-

fore they could tie the knot and start their own family. This is where the help of the community comes into play.

Neighbors, extended family and friends would all help in the construction of a Torto House. And everyone had a role: The men oversaw the building of the house, and the women were tasked with collecting wood and straws, cooking and taking care of the little ones.

The couple's family were primarily responsible for feeding everyone who helped build the house. Before construction, someone usually had the task to prepare the meal; going fishing or slaughter farm animals like goats, chicken or sheep. Even the older kids had their tasks; the older children of the family usually helped with collecting water and mixing the mud.



The average duration of constructing a Cas di Torto was 4 months.

At the end of a long day of work, everyone would gather around and enjoy a feast of hearty food. This type of help from friends and family became a tradition and was called "paga lomba": You help me today; I'll help you tomorrow.

Nowadays, traditional Cas di Torto are rare, especially those that are still inhabited. Houses that do exist probably date back more than a century. □

**Picture credits: Aruba National Library (BNA) and the Monumentbureau archive on Coleccion.aw**

## Barbara Bodner: "Aruba to me is my happy place"



**ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.**

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Insta-

gram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Barbara Bodner from Revere, MA.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is: My happy place. weather food and people. I've been coming to Aruba for over 35 years from Boston! The first time I stayed for a week. I now stay for 6 weeks. I have found my happy place. I fell in love with Aruba. In the beginning, I came with my son & friends. My son is now 41 and has a family of his own which includes my 2 grandchildren and his extended family from Chicago. We all love Aruba!"

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □





Article by Etnia Nativa

WhatsApp us 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience!

Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



Episode CCCXLI- 341

## Aruba Is More Than “We Love You”

**Etnia Nativa explores the indigenous heritage and external influences that shaped the Aruba we know today. It honors ancestral wisdom passed down by the island's first inhabitants—survival skills, medicinal plant knowledge, practical crafts, astronomical navigation, and the reading of weather patterns. Preserved through generations, these traditions continue to shape Aruba's cultural identity and affirm an enduring bond between the island, its people, and the land.**

In this new episode, Etnia Nativa reveals a deeper truth: Aruba is far older than the image often presented to the consumer world.

Long before Aruba became a modern tourist icon, its shores were reached by determined peoples. Nearly 3,000 years ago, agricultural and pottery-making communities from the Amazon and Orinoco River basins arrived—some by land, others by river, and eventually by the open sea. These Arawakan-speaking farmers and rainforest hunters mastered canoe navigation, allowing them to reach and settle throughout the Caribbean.

They transformed the region. Absorbing knowledge and displacing from earlier Paleolithic populations, they settled islands once covered in lush Prosopis

forests and dense mangrove coastlines. Aruba offered abundance: rich fishing waters, fertile soil, and wildlife capable of sustaining entire communities.

From these first settlers emerged the Caquetío people—the first known native Arubans—whose legacy still resonates beneath the island's surface. When Spanish explorers arrived, they did not encounter an empty island, but a prosperous and organized society. The Caquetío lived in kinship-based communities led by a cacique (chief), whose influence extended from Aruba deep into the South American mainland.

Their social structure emphasized balance rather than hierarchy. Status was not defined by wealth or dominance, but by age, responsibility, and the shared duty to protect the community. Leadership emerged primarily during times of conflict, while daily life revolved around the generosity of the good spirits, communal cooperation,

agricultural expertise, and profound respect for the land.

They practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, cultivating cassava, corn, sweet potatoes, yams, peanuts, beans, squash, and fruit—transforming them into staple foods still known today: arepas, funchi, pan bati, tamales, ayacas, and cachapas. Supported by the bounty of the sea and the hidden richness of the mangroves, villages remained rooted for generations.

For the Caquetío people, Aruba was never a commodity. It was home—“Nos Baranca Stimá” our beloved rock, protected, understood, and alive in the hearts of its people. That native legacy lives on among Arubans who grew up listening to their grandparents' stories, passed down through generations.

To preserve and share this heritage, Etnia Nativa was born. Located in a private residential setting, this house-museum offers an immersive journey through native art, archaeological artifacts, and historic furnishings. Each piece tells a story often absent from textbooks. Even the structure itself—carefully crafted using recycled materials—reflects continuity, resilience, and care.

Visitors do more than observe history; they engage with it. As explored in each weekly installment of this newspaper, every object, artwork, and conversation at Etnia Nativa invites the public to experience Aruba through a native lens—one that fosters renewed respect for the island's fragile ecosystem and its profound cultural depth.

For those who love Aruba not only for its beaches, but for its origins, its people, and its enduring spirit, Etnia Nativa offers a rare opportunity: to feel the island more deeply, and to understand it more truthfully. □

If you love Aruba not only for its beaches, but for its origins, its people, and its enduring spirit, experience Etnia Nativa—and leave the island loving it even more than when you arrived.

By appointment only:  
WhatsApp +297 592 2702  
etniana03@gmail.com





## Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

### Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamento—at least not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento means "how?" and is pronounced



with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

### Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

### Bon tardi

In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase.

And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

### Bon nochi.

You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

### Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation.

However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

### Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much".

## Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

**According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.**

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book,

The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in pro-

cession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves



belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat.

All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past.

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**CROSSWORD**

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS** 40 Beginning

1 Rot 41 Not tight

6 Played 42 Staggers  
a role

11 Wed in 43 Layout  
haste choices

12 Baseball's **DOWN**  
Joe 1 Put off

13 Ladder 2 Best of  
company's the best  
base

15 Greek 3 Reef  
vowel material

16 Crooner 4 Gorilla,  
Tormé for one

17 Curvy 5 Polite  
letter answer

18 Set free 6 "— of  
Two

20 Conk out 7 Guest's  
21 Scoundrel bed

22 Sweater 8 Checked  
material for fit

23 Sacred 9 Canyon  
song creator

26 Ron 25 Malign  
Weasley's sister

27 Finish last 26 Tolkien  
28 Chips buy wizard

29 Band 28 Nut's  
blaster partner

30 Monarch's 30 Sells for  
spouse

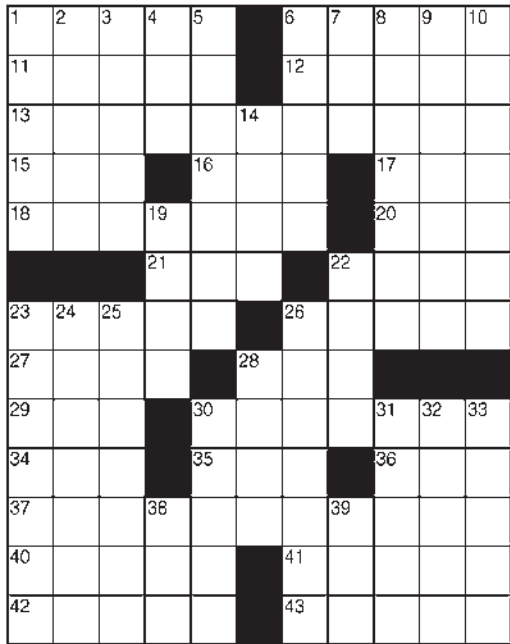
34 Maiden 31 Stellar  
name hunter

35 Unoriginal 32 Perch  
36 Aussie 33 Phone  
hopper sounds

37 Planting 38 Long  
of trees fish

39 Overly

B A B A R A L D A  
A G I L E W E E P S  
C O D E D A D A P T  
O R E E A R R E O  
N A N C Y R E A G A N  
D I A L S O L D E R  
E R I E F R I  
B A R B A R A B U S H  
A N D P O T S U E  
T I A R A O B A M A  
E A T E R R A G E R  
N E X T S N E R T



2-21

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

**2-21 CRYPTOQUOTE**

NIWSWUWG OZE CZ K DIXSV ...  
KBT OZEGBWPA IZN OZE NZEPC  
KRD NWGW KPP DIW NZGPC  
PZZTXSV KD OZE. — DIZQKB  
LWAAWGBZS

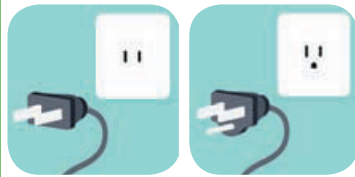
**Cryptoquote:** LET YOUR HEART  
FEEL FOR THE AFFLICTIONS AND DISTRESS  
OF EVERYONE, AND LET YOUR HAND GIVE IN  
PROPORTION TO YOUR PURSE. — GEORGE  
WASHINGTON

**Cruise ship Schedule: Feb. 9 - 15 2026**

|     |    |                      | ARR   | DEPT  | BERTH |   |
|-----|----|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| MON | 09 | MARELLA DISCOVERY 2  | 08.00 | 20.00 | C     | 1 |
| TUE | 10 | MAJESTIC PRINCESS    | 07.00 | 18.00 | B     | 1 |
|     |    | SERENADE OF THE SEAS | 08.00 | 23.00 | C     | 1 |
|     |    | OASIS OF THE SEAS    | 08.00 | 23.00 | I     | 1 |
| WED | 11 | BRITANNIA            | 07.00 | 18.00 | B     | 1 |
|     |    | CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE | 08.00 | 23.00 | C     | 1 |
|     |    | SEA CLOUD SPIRIT     | 08.00 | 14.00 | I     | 1 |
|     |    | FREEWINDS            | 06.00 | ****  | E     | 1 |
| THU | 12 | MS RENAISSANCE       | 09.00 | 18.00 | B     | 1 |
|     |    | CARIBBEAN PRINCESS   | 09.00 | 22.00 | C     | 1 |
|     |    | CARNIVAL MAGIC       | 09.00 | 22.00 | I     | 1 |
| SAT | 14 | AIDAPERLA            | 09.00 | 21.00 | C     | 1 |
| SUN | 15 | NORWEGIAN PEARL      | 08.00 | 17.00 | C     | 1 |
|     |    | FREEWINDS - Dept.    | ****  | 22.30 | E     | - |

**Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba**

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



**Electrical power**

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



**Drinking water**

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



**Safety**

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

**SUDOKU**

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

**King Classic Sudoku**

|   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |  |   |   | 7 | 2 |   | 8 | 5 |
|   |  | 7 |   | 4 |   |   |   | 2 |
|   |  | 9 | 8 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7 |  | 5 |   |   |   | 8 |   | 1 |
| 1 |  |   |   | 5 |   | 3 | 7 |   |
|   |  | 8 |   |   | 3 |   |   |   |
|   |  |   | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9 |  | 2 |   |   | 6 |   |   | 4 |
| 5 |  |   | 1 | 3 |   | 2 |   |   |

Difficulty: ★★★

2/11

**Answer to previous puzzle**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| 9 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 2 |
| 3 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| 1 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 4 |
| 6 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 3 |
| 2 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 |

Difficulty: ★★

2/10

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U.N. Secretary General António Guterres is welcomed by Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer to 10 Downing Street, London, Friday, Jan. 16, 2026.

Associated Press

## U.N. is waiting to see how much the U.S. intends to pay of the nearly \$4 billion it owes

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

**UNITED NATIONS (AP)** — The United Nations said Monday it's waiting to find out how much of the nearly \$4 billion the United States owes the world organization the Trump administration intends to pay and when the money will arrive.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned last week that the world body faces "imminent financial collapse" unless its financial rules are overhauled or all 193 member nations pay their dues, a message clearly directed at the United States.

The U.S. owes \$2.196 billion to the U.N.'s regular operating budget, including \$767 million for this year, according to a U.N. official. The U.S. also owes \$1.8 billion for the separate budget for the U.N.'s far-flung peacekeeping operations, and that also will rise.

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations confirmed that U.S. Ambassador Mike Waltz said the Trump administration planned to make a significant down payment on its arrears in a matter of weeks, with the final amount still to be determined. □

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Centro Medico:Tel.584 5794

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### EMERGENCY

|                |          |
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# What is atrial fibrillation and how is it treated?

By **MIKE STOBBE**

AP Medical Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Dan-

iel Moore was about 30 the first time it happened. At the end of a long, hot, stressful day, he chugged an ice-cold glass of milk.

"It felt like a bunny rabbit trying to jump out of my chest," said Moore, now 60. Moore, a radiologist, knew what it was: A-fib.

Short for atrial fibrillation, A-fib is a quivering or irregular heartbeat that is a worrisome stage-setter for blood clots, stroke and heart failure. Some researchers believe more than 10 million Americans have it most of them older. And it's expected to become even more common in the years ahead.

Yet, University of Utah heart researcher Dr. T. Jared Bunch sees reason for optimism.

"Even though we see more of the disease, we're better at treating it," said Bunch, who co-authored a book on A-fib.



Dr. Daniel Moore poses for The Associated Press Feb. 2, 2026, in Coppell, Texas.

Associated Press

## Symptoms can include shortness of breath

A-fib occurs when the heart's upper chambers, called the atria, beat out of sync with the lower chambers, the ventricles. Not everyone is aware something is wrong, but some people suffer alarming symptoms like a pounding heartbeat and shortness of breath. "I definitely have no exercise tolerance when I'm in it," Moore said. "I can't run. Walking is tiring faster. I get a little light-headed standing up."

The heart can surpass 200 beats per minute for someone with A-fib, more than double the 60 to 100 beats typical for a healthy adult's resting heart rate.

Symptoms can come and go, and it's not usually life-threatening by itself. But the erratic beating can lead to blood pooling in the heart that can become clots in days or even hours. Those clots, in turn, can travel to the brain and cause strokes.

A-fib also can increase the risk of developing ventricular fibrillation a more serious condition.

**Diagnosis is becoming more common**

Experts say smartwatches and other devices that can detect erratic heartbeats are one reason A-fib diagnoses are increasing. Many people who experience symptoms don't understand what is happening.

The American Heart Association found that more than half of people with A-fib didn't know about the condition before they were diagnosed.

Studies have suggested 15% or more of strokes can be tied to A-fib, and that the percentage rises in older people. The condition is one reason that U.S. stroke deaths rose in the last decade, although the stroke death rate has dipped in the last few years.

## What causes A-fib?

Researchers attribute A-fib to damage in the heart's upper chambers and its electrical signaling. Genetics can play a role, but other contributors include high blood pressure, diabetes, stress, sleep apnea, smoking and alcohol.

Those harms accumulate over time, which is one reason why the condition tends to hit older adults. About 70% of A-fib cases are people 65 and older, Bunch said.

Viruses can also pose a threat because they can affect the proteins behind the heart's electrical signals or prompt an immune response that damages heart tissue.

COVID-19 is among the list of viral culprits, and likely contributed to A-fib in some patients, experts say. Studies have found no link to COVID-19 shots, said Dr. Jose Joglar, a Dallas-based expert who helped author American Heart Association guidelines on A-fib diagnosis and management.

## Doctors have a range of treatment options

There's no cure, but a number of therapies can help manage the problem.

"We're miles beyond where we used to be" in treating A-fib, said Dr. Laurence Epstein, of Hofstra University and Northwell Health. "The technology has really evolved."

One initial treatment is a cardioversion, which involves using a defibrillator to deliver an electric shock to the heart to restore rhythm. It's often successful, but sometimes only temporarily.

For some patients, doctors may recommend implanted devices. Pacemakers can regulate heart rhythm,

and a device called a Watchman can close off a clot-prone area of the upper heart.

And then there's ablation. It's a procedure in which a doctor uses heat, cold or electric pulses to zap certain areas of the heart, creating scars that block faulty electric signals. Traditionally, ablation was used when other approaches failed, but in recent years ablation techniques have become more advanced and it has become a first choice for certain patients, including those with heart failure.

Medications to regulate the heart or thin the blood to reduce stroke risk can have problematic side effects.

## How to lower your risk

People can lower their risk of developing A-fib by living a healthy lifestyle. That includes exercising, getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, managing high blood pressure, and avoiding tobacco products and alcohol.

Doctors also have long warned about excessive levels of caffeine, although some new evidence suggests that at least a little may be OK. One small study published recently found that patients who averaged one cup a day saw less recurrence of symptoms than those who abstained entirely.

If symptoms do develop, it's important to take them seriously, said Amy Stahley, who was first diagnosed three years ago.

She went to bed one night and her heart began racing to more than 150 beats per minute. She immediately went to a hospital.

"If you're feeling a little off, get it checked out," said Stahley, who is a nurse and dean of Davenport University's College of Health Professions in Michigan.

Moore, a radiology professor at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, agreed.

"The longer you stay in A-fib, the more likely you are to stay in it for life," he said. □



### Editor

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### Editors

Pilar Flores

Richard Brooks

Angenette Figuereo

Oriana Geerman

### Sales

Mark Gomes

Sulaika Croes

### Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

### Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

### Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22  
T: 582-7800

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## Shiffrin out of the medals again at the Winter Olympics as Klæbo closes on record for golds

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

**CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (AP)** — Make that seven straight races without a medal for Mikaela Shiffrin at the Winter Olympics. The American skiing standout was given the ideal platform to win the new team combined event after partner Breezy Johnson led the opening downhill leg on Tuesday. Shiffrin was the last racer out in the slalom — the second leg of the event — and was 15th, dropping the U.S. to fourth place and extending her Olympic slump that stretches back to 2022 when she didn't win a medal in any of her six races at the Beijing Games.

Ariane Raedler and Katharina Huber of Austria won gold, while Paula Moltzan and Jacqueline Wiles took bronze ahead of their more high-profile U.S. teammates.

Olympic redemption will have to wait, then, for Shiffrin, who is the most successful World Cup racer of all time with a record 108 victories. She is set to compete in her core events of slalom and giant slalom later in the Milan Cortina Games as she looks to add to her two golds and a silver from her first two Olympics.

Johnson missed out on a second medal of these Games, having won the downhill on Sunday.

#### Klæbo nears gold medal record

Don't be surprised if Johannes Høsflot Klæbo soon holds the all-time record for gold medals at the Winter Games. The Norwegian cross-country star powered to his second straight Olympic gold — and seventh of his career — by winning the men's sprint. He was a comfortable 0.8 seconds ahead of Ben Ogden of the United States.

Klæbo moved to one gold behind three compatriots: Marit Bjørgen, Bjørn Dæhlie and Ole Einar Bjørndalen, all of whom have retired with a record-tying eight. Bjørgen and Dæhlie also were cross-country skiers.

Klæbo can join them by winning the 10 kilometers free-style on Friday. He already won the skiathlon on Sunday for his sixth gold.

In the women's final, King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden watched on as the country swept the medals. Linn Svahn edged defending champion Jonna Sundling and Maja Dahlqvist was third.

#### Both tribute to late teammate after biathlon win

Johan-Olav Botn paid tribute to a Norway teammate who died in the lead-up to the Games, after winning the men's 20-kilometer individual biathlon.

As he crossed the finish line, Botn pointed to the sky in a tribute to Sivert Guttorm Bakken, who was found dead in his hotel room in Lavazè, Italy, in December.

The golds for Botn and Klæbo took Norway to six — three more than any other nation so far.

#### Medal No. 12 for Fontana in short track speedskating

Twenty years later, Italian short track speedskater Arianna Fontana is still winning medals at the Winter Olympics. The latest was a gold in the mixed team relay. That took her to three golds and 12 medals overall in an Olympic career that started in 2006 — when she was age 15 — at the Winter Games in Turin. □

United State's Mikaela Shiffrin reacts as she looks back to see her disappointing time as Germany's Emma Aicher, background left, and Kira Weidle Winkelmann celebrate winning the silver medal in an alpine ski, women's team combined race, at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026.

Associated Press



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# Seahawks' Super Bowl-winning 'Dark Side' defense: the new 'Legion of Boom'?

**By ARNIE STAPLETON**  
**AP Pro Football Writer**  
 Undeterred by all the rules favoring the offense and quarterbacks bringing more athleticism than ever to the field, the Seattle Seahawks verified that defense can still dominate the NFL in 2026.

Seattle's Mike Macdonald became the first head coach to win a Super Bowl as his team's primary defensive play caller when the Seahawks topped the New England Patriots 29-13 on Sunday, a triumph fueled by their "Dark Side" defense the worthy successor to the "Legion of Boom" that brought home their first Lombardi Trophy 12 years earlier.



Seattle Seahawks Byron Murphy II (91), Devon Witherspoon (21), and the Seahawks defense celebrate after Murphy recovered a fumble after a sack during the third quarter of Super Bowl 60 in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026.

sure it didn't matter that Sam Darnold only threw for one touchdown and couldn't do much in the red zone. "It's insane, man," Seattle linebacker Ernest Jones IV said. "I've never been around a bunch of guys where literally nobody thought it was a Super Bowl. It was just our next game, and that's how we approached it. And defensively, we came out and said it early in the year: To win the Super Bowl, it was going to be on our backs, so like I said, I'll be damned if we get one game away and this defense doesn't show up like we're supposed to."

**Associated Press**

In the lead-up to the Super Bowl, NBC analyst Cris Collinsworth had high praise for Patriots offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels, who stewarded Maye into an MVP-worthy season and helped him navigate a 10-7 win at snowy Denver in the AFC championship despite throwing for just 86 yards. This was McDaniels' 10th Super Bowl as an assistant and it turned out to be his worst. He never took the pressure off Maye, who had a painkilling injection in his throwing shoulder before the game and was hounded relentlessly throughout. Maye conquered three top-5 defenses on his way to the Super Bowl in his second season, but he wasn't up to the task against the Seahawks, who sported the NFL's top-ranked scoring defense.

"We got to be better with the football and make better decisions and I got to make better throws when the game goes like that," Maye said. "I got to make some throws to help us move the football." And McDaniels needed to adjust way quicker than he did. Through three quarters, the Patriots had nine punts, five three-and-outs and just 78 yards of offense. □

It may not be a one-off, either. Three teams shifted toward defensive-minded leadership this coaching cycle with a trio of defensive coordinators getting head coaching jobs. The Tennessee Titans hired former 49ers defensive coordinator Robert Saleh, who used to coach the New York Jets. The Miami Dolphins hired Green Bay Packers defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley and the Baltimore Ravens turned to Los Angeles Chargers defensive coordinator Jesse Minter. Macdonald, 38, who served as the Ravens' defensive coordinator for two years before replacing Pete Carroll in Seattle two years ago, is the first head coach with primarily defensive roots to lift the Lombardi Trophy since Bill Belichick following the 2018 season.

Macdonald's defense dominated the Super Bowl from the start and held the Patriots out of the end zone until the fourth quarter. The Seahawks sacked Drake Maye six times and forced him into a pair of costly turnovers they turned into 14 points. They had three takeaways overall. Seattle's defense made

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